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THE NEW YORK
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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

THE MONARCH

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN H. FLAGG

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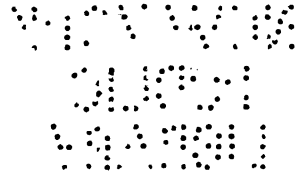

FEB 12 1908

To Edward Quintard, whose skillful service as a physician and unfailing devotion as a friend have made me a double debtor, I inscribe these pages in lasting gratitude.

J. H. F.

FEB 12 1908
21X126

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POEMS

THE MONARCH.

EHOLD!—The Monarch, Time, am I,
Whom none shall balk nor dare deny!
I will supreme in every clime
Where man would make my deeds a crime,
And thrones that rule mankind through awe,
To me decree no binding law!
Before a mortal crown was worn
Or pompous king or queen was born
My sceptre swung from every throne—
My mandates rang from zone to zone.

My mission here is to despoil—
To do it well, my only toil;—
Man's ceaseless sob and pleading prayer
To my dull ear no wailings bear.
I work alone, and have no friend
To praise, encourage or commend.
With muffled feet I stride ahead
And make no sound where'er I tread.
As youth and health to me belong,
I need no rest to keep me strong,
And weary not by day nor year
In loading death upon my bier,
Nor reaching down into the grave
To turn to dust what Nature gave.

Behold my work already done
With yet my purpose scarce begun!—
Where tropic suns now smite the earth
Gleamed icebergs once, of ponderous girth;

Where ocean billows once leapt high
Now Chimborazo cleaves the sky;
Where primal Rome was hewn and reared
Five Romes in turn have disappeared;
Where Karnak raised her mighty walls
The sluggish reptile creeps and crawls;
Where Charthage stood and held her sway
Wild forest beasts pursue their prey.

The lord of skies and seas and lands,
I spare no work of human hands!—
The sculptured forms by genius wrought;
The monuments where heroes fought;
The chiselled altars hewn from stone;
The palaces where kings are grown;
Earth's navies on the salted seas;
The mitred pope on bended knees;
The fanes upreared by pious hands;
The pyramids on Egypt's sands;

Man's castles and his rustic homes;
His temples with their gilded domes;
His campaniles and his towers
Where tolls the knell of passing hours;
His treasures, trophies, battle-won;
His states and empires scarce begun—
Alike shall perish with the rest
And turn to dust at my behest!

Yet mark besides what is to be
And naught can frustrate my decree!—
Proud Aetna's flames shall cease to burn
And glaciers melt and freeze in turn;
To nebulae I'll change the earth
And pay back Nature's debt with dearth:—
I'll pluck the planets from the skies
(Which dazzle now man's wondering eyes)
And then blot out the blazing sun
And turn to vapor whence begun:—
Then, midst the waste, behold my throne—
A Monarch still, though left alone!

THE BROOK.

AM the brook, the nimble brook,
Born in my tranquil, shaded nook
Mid solemn hills and mountain peaks
Where nature every language speaks.

Unlike the footed beasts of earth—
So frail and helpless at their birth—
I straightway creep, then stride, then run,
To greet my first uprising sun.

On, on I rush with quickened pace
And force my way from place to place,
While lesser brooklets eager flow
To swell my volume as I go.

The alders nod when I pass by;
The reeds and rushes courtesy;
And where the lilies rise and float
I suck rare nectar from each throat.

When I grow weary or depressed
I loiter at my pools to rest,
Then hurry on with doubled haste
To catch the hours allowed to waste.

When lo, I'm throttled as I wend
And harnessed like a beast to lend
My help to man's dependent hand
Which halts me with its rude command.

Thus forced, I tread man's endless wheel;
I grind his grist and mould his steel;
His looms I work with faithful hand,
And all his varied arts expand.

But soon I break from this embrace
And hasten from the servile place,
But grieve to find I've grown ten fold
Since down the mountain-side I bowled.

At length I wake, as from a dream,
To find myself a tidal stream
That brings rank sea-salt to my tongue,
A taste unknown when I was young.

And now I hear the ocean roar
And tremble at my fate in store;
I scent his breath and quail with awe,
But helpless, yield to Nature's law,—

To Nature's law I bow content,
That law which none can circumvent;
The hand that lifts the oceans' tide
Will reach to me and then abide!

WILLIAM McKINLEY.

TRUE to each trust and best when trusted most,—
For Country first, though facing peace or war,—
Making, in peace, its greatness greater still,
While yet in war his young but manly breast
On many a blood-soaked, death-strewn battle-field
Was bared to shield a Nation's heart from harm.
This man of God, born fit to lead the way
And lift mankind to nobler, loftier heights,
Alas! by Anarch's poisoned fang lies slain!
And when he fell, lo, in remotest lands
Were mingled tears and solemn, tolling bells
Proclaiming anguish equal to our own.
That blameless life,—that apt, sagacious tongue,
Though hushed on earth forevermore, yet speak
As with an angel's trumpet and declare
The better life is lingering with us still.

September, 1901.

ON A DEW DROP.

HAT is that chaste, that sparkling thing,
Which to the rose at dawn doth cling,
And nestled near its throbbing breast
Plays ardent lover while a guest?

'Tis but a tear of weeping night —
The weeping of a glad delight —
Till startled by obtruding day
Night, fearing capture, steals away.

CHILDHOOD'S HOME.

DREAMED of busy childhood days,
where sunshine ever clung,
Back in my country home again
when this old heart was young;
Through one brief hour of ecstacy, when every
thought was bliss,
With manhood's cares forsaken, what spell could
be like this?

My ravished eyes sought every place—each
object they once knew—
With nothing changed in all these years and
nothing added new;
Transfixed I stood amid the scenes so long ob-
scured from sight,
As through the windows shone, I thought, a
consecrated light.

I saw the row of flower-pots upon the window-
sill,
Wherein grew sweet geraniums that drooped
with thirst until
At sunset mother sprinkled them, and fondled
each with care:—
Methought, to gladden my return, their frag-
rance was still there.

I saw the old melodeon whose notes I'd
often heard
Commingled with my mother's voice that hal-
lowed every word;
This, long since, joined the choir unseen in an-
thems sung on high:—
I sometimes think I hear it now through cloud-
rifts in the sky.

In yonder nook—its 'customed place—stood
father's old oak chair—
Descended from ancestral lines—a gift from heir
to heir;—
As if to stay each stranger hand and shield it from
all harm,
A spider here had spun her web outstretched from
arm to arm.

How often here I'd clambered to my father's
waiting knee,
To hear his thrilling stories told of deeds on land
and sea,—
Of Indian scalpers on the plains,—of pirates fierce
and bold,—
Of hunters' daring for wild beasts—and others
search for gold.

Here was the book-case just as when, at pleasant
evening time,
I searched the well-worn volumes through for
picture or for rhyme:
For just plain books I did not care,—they baffled
me with lore—
Whatever one I tried to read I soon declared a
bore.

There hung the old gilt mirror still, near to the parlor door,
Where I'd intently gazed upon my new clothes from the store,
And once had donned my brother's suit when to the glass I ran,
To see how big and brave I'd look when I became a man.

There stood the same old kitchen stove, where many a nipping day,
I'd held my freezing, outstretched hands when I came in from play;
This good old friend had one grave fault—it burned out wood so fast—
I lugged it in incessantly, until the cold months passed.

Its glowing sides my mother sought in patient
willing toil,
To make the good things for us all that careless
cooks might spoil;
She always baked me special pies and cookies,
cakes, galore,
And yet I claimed I grew so fast I needed
just one more.

There peered the old remorseless clock that
watched me argus-eyed,
And when my bed-time hour arrived my
patience oft had tried;
'Twas then I claimed it ran too fast, while
mother claimed 'twas slow;—
Whatever my contention was I always had to
go—

Go to my far-off attic bed when mother led
the way,
Whose candle and assuring words my fears did
not allay;—
She bore away the candle, after kissing me
good-night,
But all through life I've felt that kiss and seen
that vanished light.

There was the same old ample shelf that father
called his own,
Where he kept Bible, pipe and pen and all
odd things were thrown;
Beneath it, hung the almanac, that said in
letters bold,
"*About this time look out for squalls*" — which
prophecy controlled.

I heard the rattling Autumn hail upon the window-pane,
Forewarning that dread Winter days were stealing back again;
Thanksgiving was approaching, too,—that boon from old Cape Cod,—
Ordained by pious Pilgrim sires, in gratefulness to God.

I whistled then for dear "old Jack," who hastened to my side,—
That noble, true, confiding friend—my comrade and my pride;
Where'er I strayed he too must go,—I always felt his touch,—
'Twas hard to call him but a brute, he knew and felt so much.

We wandered then down to the brook beyond
our sugar-place,
Where often at the old mill-hole I'd stood and
bobbed for dace,
And once a big trout took my bait—I quiver-
ed with delight—
Until my line caught on a snag quite hidden
from my sight.

Throughout that Summer, day by day, at
dawn, at noon, at eve,
I vainly angled for that trout more hours than
you'd believe;
But while he thus outwitted me, I learned
from Nature's book,
That boys can never be true boys unless they
haunt some brook.

I woke to find these vanished scenes of child-
hood's cherished hours
A dream of what they once had been, and only
perished flowers;
Yet glad and grateful e'en for this, I search
through memory's path
And pluck with joy each perfumed leaf from
Dreamland's aftermath.

CAPTIVITY.

HY tender, thoughtful, earnest eyes—
Within their tranquil depths there lies
A magic power, unknown to thee,
That chains me in captivity.

The morning light the brighter grows
Wherever their effulgence glows,
And e'en at night their potent ray
Converts the darkness into day.

So would my pathway through each year
Of life's contending hope and fear,
Be made one blissful, hallowed spell,
Should such supernal light there dwell.

THE VOICE OF THE ROSE.

NCE happy I, when lone I dwelt,
And ne'er a stranger's hand
I felt,—
The hedge-row, lane and upland mine,
Companioned with the herds and kine.

I then knew well each sister's face,
Her gentle smile and growing grace,
While blooming there through summers long
With honied bees and birds of song.

But oft I've seen, with trembling fear,
Some idle school-boy loitering near
To pluck me in my morning pride,
When I my blushing face would hide.

Through days we've watched, and each in turn,
For moving bush, or bending fern,
To warn against intrusions there,
That we our humble lives might spare.

While thorns that guarded each frail flower,
True to their trust, enforced their power,
Yet still some ruthless hand each day
Would pluck and bear our best away,—

Away perchance to stifling air
To pour reluctant fragrance there,
Unnoticed by the boisterous throng
Whose wine provokes their maudlin song;—

Or where in shame and worse despair
'Twere tangled in some harlot's hair,
And through the long and hideous night
Would languish, fade and die affright;—

Or where Love's gentle voice is heard—
Mute witness to each spoken word—
Where his impassioned vows reveal
The rapture which young lovers feel;—

Or where it decks the trembling bride
When kneeling at the altar-side;
Or to her pathway where 'twould lend
A fragrant Springtime to the end.

Or where the broken-hearted prays
When fade life's gorgeous sunset rays,
With speechless lips and reverent head
Its incense there is gladly shed;—

And we an equal homage yield
To those whose faults were not concealed;—
With joy we linger at the grave
Which man condemned, but God forgave."

Thus spoke the lowly-hearted rose
And told its pleasures and its woes;
So henceforth let man's friendly hand
Guard well these wonders God hath planned,

And treat them as a sacred trust
(For they ask not but what is just)
And spare them from pollution where
Their gracious fragrance fills the air—

Since only in the heavenly thought
Were such ethereal marvels wrought:—
Our souls, by sparing these frail things,
Are lifted as by angel wings.

MOUNT BLANC.

TERNAL Mount, whose brow serene
Rests pillowed on the clouds, half-seen,
What longing thy abode inspires
In human hearts — what vast desires!

'Tis not decreed that mortal clod
Should dwell on earth and still with God,
But thou, reared from the lowly vale,
Dost in supernal realms prevail.

And then, as if thou hadst a soul
  Pervading its celestial goal,
Thou hast attained and wearest now,
  A spotless mantle for thy brow.

And He who did a promise give
  That man shall more than mortal live,
Renews that emblem day by day,
  That it may never fade away.

Thus, hallowed Mount, from realms divine
  Thy coronet shall ever shine—
A beacon, beaming far and wide,
  For weary, wayward feet a guide!

Chamounix, Aug. 30th, 1873.

TO JUSTIN S. MORRILL.

(A Senator of the United States from 1867 to 1899.)

ON HIS EIGHTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY,
APRIL 14TH, 1893.

IKE some o'ertowering forest oak that still
Withstands the winds of four-score years and more,

While growths of younger years uprooted fall,—
Hoary with ripened leaf, but tried and strong,

Thou standest waiting for those rapturous
days
When blooming fields, kissed by the vernal
sun,
With fragrant breath speak gratitude.
We hail thee now with fonder, firmer grasp,
Thankful to Him who rules all destines,
That, well-nigh shivered by the furious blast [1]
Which bent thee low and made all hearts
despair,
Thou'rt left the stronger by the gale, and still
Can with thy friends rejoice this natal day
To stand on earth though gazing into heaven!

And yet for worth and fame and all that makes
Life grand and great, thou surely hast no
need
To further go. Within the wondrous time
Wherein thou led'st the panting legions on,

1 A serious illness.

The fettered have been freed, and hushed the sounds
Of cursèd war whose awful uproar once
Convulsed the troubled land from sea to sea.
Saved is the State, and hostile cannon now
Are molded into pryamids of peace!

The eager throngs that crowd our shores to join
The Nation's jubilee,[2] may marvel much
Before the temple thou hast helped to rear
To law and justice long denied, and mark
The mighty march of an enfranchised race
Toward the blood-bought rights of men.

Old friend,
Thy well-earned rest has come. A grateful State
Whose every cause was served so long, so well,
Withholds no added honor from thy name,
But prays that thou shalt have forevermore
The crowning peace thou hast for others won!

2 World's Columbian Exposition in 1893.

THE SERENADE.

HE smiling stars shine o'er my head,
For now the longing day hath fled
Whose hours seemed more than years to me
Because they held me far from thee,—

From thee my sweet, my precious rose,
Now lost in dreams and soft repose—
In dreams of some far world of bliss,
For thou wert made too pure for this.

An Ariel would I gladly be,
And were I one I'd bear to thee
The choicest flowers that bud and bloom
To shed round thee their rare perfume.

I'd lure birds from their chosen climes
To sing for thee their sweetest rhymes,
For thy rare beauty would inspire
Their raptured souls with such desire.

O wake and listen to my song—
That which hath pressed my heart so long—
And thus assuage its throbbing pain
Though passion's fire shall still remain!

But if thy slumbers thou shalt keep,
Of me I crave one thought may creep
Into thy visions, pure and blest,
And then content this heart can rest.

CLARK AND THE OREGON.

HE Oregon at anchor lay, within the Golden Gate,
And far remote from surging waves — a thing inanimate —
When came an order, urgent, brief, to make for Callao,
And there await — for war might be — and with no dastard foe.
"All hands to anchor!" shouted Clark; then tugged each groaning chain,
And, ere the night, that battleship was ploughing through the main.

And from that grave and anxious hour, for tidings still to learn,
She rushing, left her foaming wake, for lengths and lengths astern;
Along Pacific's coast she sped, as ship ne'er sped before,
Led by the Southern Cross whose beam each wave in sequence bore.
Callao reached, late orders read, at once for Rio sail,—
Then on she swept, like mountain mist, before a raging gale.
She leapt into Magellan's jaws—more dreaded than armed foes—
And safe beyond their reefs and rocks, wild cheer on cheer arose.

What though Cervera's fleet were met? — what
though in wait it lay? —
Such danger made her falter not, but eager for
the fray. —
What though her sailors hungry went, and
knew not sleep, nor rest,
If, yielding what they needed most would serve
their country best?
The sturdy stokers, nigh outworn, still hotter
made the fires,
And not a man, though parched with thirst,
once stopped to quench desires.
The North Star struggled from afar to throw
its potent ray —
That beacon which the brightest burns when
lighting Freedom's way.

Toward its beam, through wind and wave, the
battleship swept on,
While Clark stood constant on the bridge and
watched for lurking Don.
At length, she entered Rio's port, where late
dispatches bore
News that the dogs of war were loosed and
bayed along our shore.—
Then like a meteor she swept on to join our
fleet away
At Santiago's armored gate, where it held Spain
at bay.
The engineers, unconscious grown, by stifling
air, alack,
When borne to deck and half restored, tried
hard to stagger back;

And though this sovereign of the sea five thousand leagues had run,
This paragon of battleships, as fresh as when begun,—
With Clark at helm — with crew elate,— (this more than welcome guest)—
Unhalting, pushed to Sampson's line, then proved herself his best.

That Sabbath morn had calmly dawned, and through the languid air
Came far, faint sounds of convent bells that called to grateful prayer;
But Oh! what crashing thunders break when now the foemen meet!—
For look you there,—on swiftly comes Cervera's royal fleet—

Defiant, and with war-like mien, out through
the narrow bay!
All-desperate, they open fire and force the
awful fray,
But Sampson's roaring guns reply, "You're wel-
come here, come on!"—
And furies of a thousand hells are gathered
here in one!
Through smoke and fume the battle waged,
and every shell we sent
Was planted where it counted most, and where
our gunners meant:—
Then, leading all, the Oregon leapt foremost
to the van,
And raked and riddled with her shells, each
deck that bore a man,—

While Clark forgot his conning-tower, where
danger was the least,
And on his forward turret stood, where danger
never ceased.
The Spainards read their tragic fate in their
doomed cruisers' light,
And all aflame, dashed on the shore, and thus
gave up the fight.

Henceforth, on fame's eternal page, the Oregon
will shine,
And Clark—that brave "Green-Mountain Boy"—
will be in every line,—
That hill-born hero of the waves, whose name
revered will be,
So long as valor has a place in annals of the
sea.

Elsewhere they vaunt their pedigrees, and boast
of "royal blood,"
But through *his* veins coursed "royal blood"
not made by man, but God—
The kind that captured old "Fort Ti.," and
won at Bennington,
Where grand old Stark the Hessians fought,
until the sinking sun.
While Clark and Dewey tread our decks—
those peerless of our brave,—
From every mast, on every breeze, "Old
Glory" still shall wave!

A MEMORY.

LOOKED upon such wondrous face,
Such beauty, such surpassing grace,
Had ever artist once portrayed
The faultless features I surveyed,
He would thereby have won a name
Still absent from the page of fame.

While thus I gazed, intent, beguiled,
The vision moved, and then it smiled,
And o'er a harp ſlew two white hands
Like mated swallows o'er the sands.
Methought, what wondrous magic brings
Such melting strains from those mute strings.—

Then Nature — not content to spare
One gift or grace from her so ſair —
She sang. Such sweet and tender notes
Could only come ſrom angel throats;—
A praising saint could not compare
With sounds so touching and so rare.—

First came the warble of a bird; —
  Then but a human voice was heard; —
Then some yet more impassioned strain
  Infused my pulse and thrilled my brain.
As o'er the strand the billows roll,
  This lapped and laved my raptured soul.

But vain, indeed, it were to ask
  Of artist hand — unequal task —
To portray half the gifts divine
  Embodied there in every line, —
For, had one sought by art to trace
  The beauty of that matchless face,
The vision would have dazed the brain,
  And moveless must that hand have lain.

THE TESTY DEACON.

WAS down in the old Pine Tree state
Where chanced to pass what I relate,—
The land where pies and cakes abound,
And Yankees at their best are found;

Where natives serve their pork and beans
In methods fit for kings and queens,
And where French gastronomic art
Is not in vogue in any part.

'Twas in a rural farming town
(That never yet had won renown)
Where dwelt a farmer — Ephraim Hale —
The subject of this woful tale.

Now "Deacon Eph" as he was called
Wore well his years, though long since bald,
And seemed to lead a righteous life
Though mighty testy with his wife.

Long deacon in the village church
His goodly name had known no smirch;
His neighbors all were proud that he
Should such a model neighbor be.

Now one grave fault the deacon had
  Which was a temper, always bad;
And this he lashed with passion's whip
  And made it sting at every clip.

With Yankee thrift he money made
  By keeping geese that often strayed
Unto his neighbor's very door
  And wrecked his garden o'er and o'er.

One day this neighbor — Moses Slade —
  Espied them, while in ambush laid —
Each delving like a lusty Turk
  To ruin all his careful work.

He straightway ran and seized each goose
  And e're he turned the creature loose
Slit through the web between its toes
  And made *one* foot just like a crow's.

In panic then they hustled all
  To get beyond the garden wall,
And chose the shortest route for home
  Without desire to further roam.

They sought at once (by instinct led)
  The near-by pond where they were bred,
And then proceeded, one by one,
  To navigate as they had done.

But lo! their calculations failed,
And all acquatic ardor quailed
When round and round their bodies spun,
With not an inch of headway won.

When thus the deacon found his geese,
His rage foretold a breach of peace; —
He swore revenge on neighbor Slade
Though he through blood should have
to wade.

So, well disguised, the first dark night,
He sought his neighbor's barn for spite,
And seized the tail of his old mare
And sheared it clean of every hair.

Then farmer Slade was wroth in turn,
And for revenge his heart did burn;—
He swore he'd "pickle old Hale's hide,
And drive him from the church beside."

He sought a Justice of the Peace,
And, (keeping mum about the geese,)
In his complaint discreetly swore
Of what occurred the night before.—

Therein he charged one Ephraim Hale,
In legal terms—full of detail—
With mutilating his old mare
By shaving off her caudal hair.—

He ſurther swore that the offense
Arose from malice, called "prepense,"
And that such act did violate
The peace and dignity of State.

He prayed the Justice there to grant
A warrant for the miscreant,
Which then was signed, with formal care,
And with a grave, judicial air.

'Twas with much craft that ſarmer Slade
On Saturday his charge had made,
So that arrest should ſall that night
And thus make worse the deacon's plight.

Just at the hour of evening prayers
Went forth the sheriff unawares
To make arrest of deacon Hale
And take him to the county jail.

The deacon answered his loud knock
As struck the hour of nine o'clock
And warmly bade him enter in
As if he were his fondest kin.

The sheriff soon his mission told
And then the warrant did unfold
Which he read through in solemn tones
Oft punctured by the deacon's groans.

Then Ephraim, who was much enraged,
Tore like a tiger first encaged,
And charged upon that viper, Slade,
The outrage of this foul crusade.

Though "Mother Hale" for mercy plead,
And grievous tears in plenty shed,—
All proved to be of no avail
To save her raving spouse from jail.

Full half that wretched night was o'er,
When swung the jailor's ponderous door
Through which the sheriff quickly passed
Together with his charge, held fast.

The deacon still with anger burned,
  Yet meekly to the jailor turned,
As if his mild and tender eye
  Betokened welcome sympathy.

"Tell me," said he, "what can I do
  To make my hours here brief and few?"—
"Until you're tried, you must get bail,"
  The jailor said, "or stay in jail."

"That will I do," quoth Hale, "this night,
  And leave this den before day-light,
Then to my church I'll promptly go
  And no one of this plight shall know."

"You can't do that," the jailor said,
"For Justice lies asleep in bed;—
Besides, the Sabbath's now well on
And that, in law, is *dies non*."

The deacon never closed his eyes,
But all that night tried to devise
The means whereby he might get bail
And flee far from that curséd jail.

That Sabbath day he gave to prayer,
And thoughts of sacred things elsewhere;—
His waiting home; his weeping wife,
And church he'd missed not once through life.

When bail, at length, had been obtained
And Ephraim had his freedom gained,
His homeward journey he began —
A wiser, though much sadder man.

But he, alas, in church and out,
Had enemies who had no dóubt
That there was ample evidence
To fix on him that grave offense.

A special meeting of the church
Was called to instigate a search,
And a committee chosen there
Was sent to view the hapless mare.

They found, indeed, the ancient brute
  Bereft of caudal growth hirsute,
But not one fact to prove, withal,
  Who plied the art tonsorial.

And so, their mission having failed,
  (A fact that most of them bewailed,)
There seemed to be no earthly clue
  Which they with hope could then pursue.

But, while in vain they tried, each one,
  To learn by whom the deed was done,
A tramp came sliding down the mow,
  Who told by whom, and when and how.—

He stated that on one dark night
While in the barn, appeared a light,
And that he "watched and saw old Hale
With sheep-shears trim that hosses tail."

"He knew" he said, "that old cuss well,"
And instances he then did tell,
When from his watch-dogged house he'd fled
While foraging for needful bread.

From what they thus had seen and heard
Their pious souls were deeply stirred,
And all agreed, with prompt accord,
To put the guilty to the sword,—

For now the church was up in arms,
  And for just once omitted psalms;—
Their model was in deep disgrace
  And in the church should have no place.

From office he was then deposed;
  His name was dropped; his pew was closed,
And neighbor Slade, who owned the mare,
  Was chosen deacon then and there.

The lesson of this touching tale,
  While dearly bought by Ephraim Hale,
Shows well how a few brainless geese
  A deacon taught to keep the peace!

COLUMBIA.

GODDESS, stay thy threatening hand
From alien hosts in that far land
Whose voice now rends the pity-
ing sky
With plaintive cries for liberty!

The girdle 'neath thy throbbing breast
Was forged from chains of those oppressed;
The stripes upon thy stola — these
Are blood-stains of thy votaries.

The spangled cap that crowns thy head
Was placed there by the martyred dead,
Who braved and bled and died in vain,
If struggling Freedom shall not gain.

O, stretch thy helping arm to free
The prostrate forms that kneel to thee,
And give to men, unjustly blamed,
The sacred rights thy birth proclaimed!

January, 1899.

I THINK OF THEE.

THINK of thee when, dim and gray,
Belated, drowsy night is roused,
And loath to go, half-clad and slow,
Recedes before advancing day.

I think of thee when anxious care
Enslaves me through each labored hour;
But toil were sweet, with joy replete,
Could I for thee my burdens bear.

I think of thee with fonder heart,
When day, commingling with the night,
Prolongs his kiss of transient bliss
Like lovers when enforced to part.

Then in my hours of deep repose
On thee my craving dreams still feast,
Yet when I wake, with hunger's ache,
My yearning but intenser grows.

And thus my aching heart for thee
Throbs on throughout each longing day, —
In wild desire, a quenchless fire,
Till smothered by eternity.

THE WOODS.

AIN to the vaulted woods I go, where solitude doth reign,
And seat me on some lichened rock, a brief surcease to gain
From tumult of the maddening mart, where men contend for gold,
And barter governs every thought, though lives be bought and sold.—

Here would I breathe the balsamed air, the freshness of the trees,
And listen to the song of birds, and hum of gathering bees;
Ah, here is peace, supernal peace, a paradise regained,
Where man can soothe his troubled soul and feel himself enchained!

Here spread the hemlocks' feathery wings; here lift the stately pines;
Here, whitened birches whiter seem, by ruddy, clinging vines;
Here, too, the fruitful chestnuts tower, and in the lengthening year,
With bursting burrs and shining nuts the scampering squirrels cheer.

On yonder spruce, now spectral grown, and
aged with countless ills,
The lone woodpecker urgent raps, then listens
where he drills
To hear the toiling insect stir, where strips of
bark yet cling,
Then pecks again till one is found, and flies
on fleeter wing.

But hark! I hear the partridge drum, to call
his absent mate;
And then the silver-throated thrush his ecstacies
relate;
The veeries and the vireos make all the woods
rejoice,
And rapture comes when whip-poor-wills add
their enchanting voice.

God made no earthly place like this, to lull
sad weary souls,
Where Nature's untrained orchestra beguiles and
then consoles;
And as I tread the beaten path, down life's de-
cending hill,
The transports of this sylvan spot will haunt
and cheer me still!

VERMONT.

HY very name doth symbolize
Thy verdant peaks that proudly rise,
As if to buttress with their might
The unpropped dome of heavenly light.

The beauty of thy matchless hills
  The ravished eye with rapture fills,
While thy fair fields and fertile plains
  Bear flocks and herds and bounteous grains.

Thy Druid forests still conceal
  The eagles that high o'er them wheel,
And shelter well the panting deer
  When driven from the open near.

Thy hillside homes and hamlets all
  Proclaim content and thrift withal;—
No servile lines yet mark the face
  Of thy courageous, sturdy race.

Such land is thine, sons of thy birth,
  Whose sires, with blood, paid Freedom's
    worth;
Who vanquished each invading foe
  And swept him back, or laid him low.

No trembling slave yet breathed thy air
  Whose shackles longer bound him there,
For, by thy ancient Bill of Rights[1]
  All men stood equal on thy heights.

O happy land, thus early blessed,
  Where all were free and none oppressed,
Thank well those sires whose master hand
  Built from thy rock and not thy sand!

[1] Vermont was the first of the States to prohibit Slavery by Constitutional Convention, viz., July, 1777.

THE RETURN.

ROM childhood's village, years away,
I once more trod its lonely street,
The morning of a summer's day,
Nor saw one face to know and greet.

I crossed the bridge where once the stream
  Ran dark and deep and hurriedly,
But now I saw — how like a dream —
  Its waters ripple languidly.

I saw, near by, the school-house, where
  In torments of captivity,
Full many a day, imprisoned there,
  Was to me an eternity.

But where my school-mates, at their task,
  Were daily gathered, half the year,
Desertion stared and seemed to ask: —
  "What stranger is now sauntering here?"

Hard by, the "meeting-house" still stood
  Where, in my boyhood, old and young
Met in one common brotherhood
  To worship God with reverent tongue.

How memory now brought in review
  My childhood friends once gathered there;
The gray, now gone; the young I knew,
  Themselves now gray with years and care.

Methought, alas, how many score
  Had, in their last majestic state,
Been brought from out its ample door
  To pass, since then, yon church-yard gate.

I entered there among the dead;
  Then slowly strolled past chiseled stones,
And here, anon, I paused and read
  The fond names of remembered ones.

Such caravan of years had passed
  Since I this grass-grown path had trod,—
'Twas now a marbled city vast,
  Of those whose souls repose with God.

With heavy heart, I wandered on
  Through neighboring aisles still narrower,
Until, at last, I came upon
  The hallowed spot where kindred were.

And standing, with its lines severe,
  Their marble monolith I viewed,—
Pure as an angel's frozen tear,—
  Fit emblem of their lives renewed.

But Nature comforts my sad heart,—
  For her enduring smiles here rest,—
Where buds and blossoms fain impart
  A fragrance that seems hallowed, blest;

Where suns first kiss the breast of Spring,
  And birds are lured from chosen ways,
And, resting here their weary wing,
  Outpour their sweetest roundelays;—

Where blossoms hid amongst the bowers
  Are sought by humming birds and bees,
Who bring their sweets from distant flowers
  To dwell enraptured here with these.

And as o'er tides I'm swept along
  To wakeless dreams on sightless shore,
My benediction would prolong
  Peace to their dust, forevermore!

THE ALCHEMIST.

HAT peerless Alchemist, the heart,
Transcending the magician's art,
Imbues each tear, by passion wrought,
With distillations of our thought.

And hence emotion's laden tear
Knows more than wisest sage or seer
Or oceans vast, that ebb and flow,
Of human joy and human woe.

CHILDHOOD'S DREAM.

H, blesséd was that childhood day,
When with sweet Alice, blithe and gay,
I tripped adown the country lane,
Her hand in mine — her gallant swain.

O, she was more than Saxon fair
With sunbeams nestled in her hair,
While from her gladsome, heaven-blue eyes
One caught the gleams of paradise.

Her lips were like two rubies set
With pearls between — I see them yet —
As when she, blushing, to me said,
"I love you, if you love me, Ned."

I answered in no doubting way,
Down in the lane that joyful day;
And thence our two hearts beat as one
And few were hours they beat alone.

No darkening shadow, cloud or mist
  Pervaded that secluded tryst,
But every sun shone full and fair
  And taught its rays to linger there.

Life then was one sweet reverie;
  Its rhythm one fond melody;
That melody one gentle voice
  Whose accents bade my heart rejoice.

But lo! what grief soon pierced my heart
  And sent its pang to every part
When illness came, and Alice died,
  And wondering angels turned and sighed.

And since that day, how vainly I
  Have tried to solve life's mystery,—
To understand why buds that bloom
  Should, ere their fruitage, reach their
    doom;—

Why childhood, fresh and fair and pure
  Should be the one for death to lure,
While age is left to totter through
  Still other years, concealed from view.

Life's noon had passed, ere once again
  I wandered through that hallowed lane,
And lo, how changed!—few signs it bore
  That I had trod its path before.

I sought that humble cottage near,
  Which through my childhood was so dear,
But found it not; where once it stood
  Were tangled weeds and blackened wood.

With saddened heart I turned to go,
  But spied, hard by, a headstone low,
Whereat I paused, and through my tears,
  Read — "Here lies Alice: aged ten years."

THE AWAKENING.

T length the mystic touch of Spring
Awakes the slumbering forms of earth,
When Nature spreads her warming wing,
And blesses all with glad rebirth.

Her breath infuses every breeze
With odors and perfumes divine,
Drawn from the blossomed apple trees
And every fragrant bud and vine.

Now robins sing their sweetest song—
And bobolinks and orioles,—
Sweetest because suppressed so long
It bursts from out their brimming souls.

Now comes the chirp of building birds;
The noisy caw of watchful crows;
While from the hill-side's browsing herds
The distant cow-bell's tinkle flows.

The blackbirds from the willows cry;
The plover pipes in yonder bogs,
And from the stagnant pool, hard by,
Rise amorous murmurings of the frogs.

Such mingled sweets and rhapsodies
Soothe every sense with anodynes;—
In vain I strive, through languor's eyes,
To comprehend God's vast designs!

THE FINAL VOYAGE.

HE night was starless, bleak and drear,
And through the rigging one could hear
The wild winds blowing, bearing moans
Discordant to the ear, and groans
Of ship, now tossed from side to side,
As on she trembled o'er the tide.

Yet plunged she through the stormy way,
With throes that brought but pale dismay
To stalwart hearts, appalled by fear,
That sent to cheeks the anxious tear
Lest kindred on a distant shore,
Might wait, alas, forevermore.

Beneath the deck's low, creaking beam,
In calm repose and joyful dream,
An aged mother, lone and ill,
Throughout the tempest slumbered still,
Whose lamp of life, with fading ray,
Foretold her near and final day.

Long widowed, she had lived through toil
On distant Scotland's storied soil;
For, one by one, at man's estate,
Their pulses strong, their hearts elate,
Her sons had sought far western shores
Where Plenty stood at opened doors.

And thus, with all life's sunshine lost,
Time touched her with its wilting frost;
Then years grew long, and dark the way,
Like shadows at departing day,
And fondest of her dreams were fain
To clasp and kiss her boys again.

Through night and storm and troubled sea
She slumbered on in ecstacy,
Still dreaming of her darling boys
And future years of waiting joys;—
But ere the cloud-swept sun arose
Her soul had fled from all its woes.

That morn so bright, in steerage lay—
Its spirit fled—the mortal clay;
And soon the sailors' heavy tread
Bore to the deck the humble dead,
In canvas shroud, with cordage bound,
While wailing sea-gulls hovered round.

Then near the dead and yet along,
  There huddled sailors, mute and strong,
Who lowered down the vessel's side
  That muffled form to waters wide,
Which sank beneath the wave's embrace,
  Whose sepulchre no kin can trace.

For her no tolling bell was heard,
  Nor sob, nor sigh, nor spoken word;
But memories yet will toll a knell
  In hearts that still remember well
Their slumbers soft, and blissful rest,
  Upon that mother's loving breast.

UNDAUNTED.

AY, lingering at the western door,
Looks back, with taper in his hand,
And dimly lights the purple floor,
Whereon approaching Night will stand.

Throughout the heaven's boundless height
  Hang twilight's lamps now burning low,
But as they spy the goddess, Night,
  They greet her with their brightest glow.

She, stealing from her hidden bowers —
  Her faithful service to maintain —
Patrols the dark and lonely hours,
  To guard, in turn, Day's vast domain.

Together, they, like sentinels,
  Have paced through centuries that were,
Which, huddled in their mouldy cells,
  Repose in Time's vast sepulchre.

Since parting at primeval dawn—
When last he saw her beauteous face—
Day has pursued this nimble fawn
With yearning heart and eager pace.

Unwearied by his futile chase;
Undaunted, too, by cruel fate,
Yet yearning for one fond embrace,
Each morn he bursts the Orient gate.

His passion now resistless grown,
He throws his arms from roseate bowers;
But timid Night, alert, has flown,
And left her tears upon the flowers.

ACROSS THE STREET.

o club-house "swells" who crowd,
en masse,
To stare at maidens as they pass, —
On that vain throng, just out of bed,
Which turns its eyes, but not its head, —
For adoration decked, arrayed,
In "stunning" clothes, all "ready-made;" —
A scene like this, to dudish eyes,
Is like a glimpse of paradise.

But now and then a clubless man
  May have his day Elysian,
For, as he homeward plods at night,
  There may from off the car alight
(Just at the corner where he dwells)
  Some Aphrodite who excels
The Grecian goddess in the grace
  And beauty of her classic face:—
And then, (since luck has turned his way,)
  May learn, perchance, the following day
That this rare maid lives in the *suite*
  That faces his, across the street;—
A creature far more shy than bold;
  With glowing cheeks and hair of gold;
Whose eyes have stole the skies' own blue;
  Whose lips would pale the poppy's hue;
Whose form so luscious, ripe and rare,
  'Twould seem to charm the very air
Through which she moves, with faultless grace,
  To hide, at times, her roguish face.—

Yes, once I met a celibate
  Who vouched for what I thus relate.
He proved to be that very man—
  (The one without a club or clan,)
Who then proceeded to narrate
  The outcome of his harrowing fate:—

"From out my window, hour by hour,
  I once watched Nature's fairest flower.
She smiled in most bewitching ways,
  And each month flirted thirty days
Most ardently, yet so reserved,
  That had bread been thus scantly served,
I starved each day while lingering yet
  To gaze upon this rare coquette."

"So while this maid, in that coy way,
  Thus tortured me from day to day,
I realized how very fine
  Grandmother Prude had drawn the line

Permitting, say, a hundred smiles,
But kept us dumb as two gargoyles."

"But science, ah, that brought relief,
Just when I might have come to grief.
I therefore bought a telephone —
Which lovers' service oft had done —
(Since Madame Grundy's stern decree
O'erlooked this form of ecstacy,)
Then drank the nectar, sip by sip,
In accents from her honied lip,
Until my brain took wings and flew
To realms whereof it never knew,
Where sweet communion was ordained
And more than former joys attained,
'Till, Icarous-like, the heated wires
Were melted by our ardent fires;
And when, in haste and unawares,
I dropped to earth to make repairs,
This charmer stood, at her front door,
Coquetting with my janitor!"

TO MARJORIE.

(A DÉBUTANTE)

O MARJORIE, with brow so fair, and
heart so chaste and pure,
The world adoring thee beholds
thy fit investiture;
For now, in queenly robes thou standst, a bride
to coming years,
As smiling Future beckons thee, while stands
the Past in tears.
O goddess of the present, thou! O vision of
the morrow!
Thy younger comrades bid adieu with heavy
heart and sorrow.

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May every fond, enchanting dream of child-
hood's happy hour,
Bring forth its glad reality, and every bud its
flower.
But as life's pathway thou dost tread, and up
its steeps dost climb,
Choose for thy comrades Charity, and Hope
and Faith sublime;—
Then thou hast taught humanity how justly
thou hast earned,
The heavenly radiance from above, that on thy
head is turned.

THE PRODIGAL:

HY should man loiter by the way—
A vagrant through each golden day?
And why should he so weary grow
With countless blessings here below?
And why complain that he should share
Such burdens as his fellows bear,
And live but for life's joys alone,
Nor grateful be, for every one?

The mighty oak's concentric ring
  Counts well each oft-recurring Spring;—
The sands when dropping from the glass
  Hold back the seconds as they pass;—
The time-worn clock in yonder tower
  Reluctant tolls each passing hour,
And nought but man, by reckless haste,
  Permits one precious hour to waste,
Nor like a spendthrift, seeks to borrow
  For use to-day, hours of the morrow.
Will such a squanderer ever learn
  His lamp of life to wisely burn,
So that the oil shall feed its ray
  To light his feet at close of day!

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